

City of Manchester Healthy Food Access Plan Community Roundtable Facilitation Guide

This facilitation guide was used to guide discussion during the 10 community roundtable events in September and October of 2022. For more information on the events including locations and attendees, please see the Manchester Healthy Food Access Plan.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Manchester Health Department and the Manchester Food Collaborative have formed a working group to lead several food planning initiatives for the City of Manchester, New Hampshire. The City received funds through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) which will be directed toward programs and policies that can address food access and food insecurity issues.

The primary goal is to develop a Healthy Food Access Plan with recommendations to increase food access within the city that will be implemented in 2023. The plan will be developed through a community-driven process so that goals and recommendations in the Plan address the challenges faced by residents and build upon community assets.

In order to gather diverse community feedback on residents' experience with accessing healthy food, the team is working with community organizations across the city to lead 10+ roundtable discussions. Feedback from these discussions will directly shape the plan's content and inform city leadership about issues the community is facing regarding healthy food access as well as residents' suggestions for potential solutions.

COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE FACILITATION

For each breakout group, there will be one facilitator and one note taker. The role of the facilitator will be to ask the questions, deliver prompts (if needed), and keep the group on task and on time. The role of the note taker is to capture the key points of the conversation.

FACILITATORS

- **General Facilitation Tips**
 - Try to...
 - Pay attention to non-verbal signals. Someone might be sending a cue that they are uncomfortable or might have something to say.
 - Ask open-ended questions, one at a time.
 - Probe when a response is unclear. Ask, "Can you say more about..." instead of "Why do you think..." The latter may make participants feel they need to defend their point of view.
 - Balance participation by asking, "Who else has something to say?" or "I would like to hear more from..."
 - Redirect the discussion when it strays too far off topic. Say something like, "These are important and interesting points. However, we need to bring the discussion back to our main focus on..."
 - Check with participants that you understand what they are saying. "What I'm hearing is...is that correct?"
 - Avoid...
 - Reading the script questions verbatim; this may come across too stiff and formal.
 - Finishing people's sentences or making assumptions about what is being said by someone.
 - Allowing one or two people to dominate or to use the focus group for their own agenda.
 - Permitting side discussion; this can distract others from the main discussion.
 - Taking sides or challenging what is being said; try to remain impartial.

- **Roundtable Set Up & Introductions**

- Introduce yourself and the note taker, explain roles.
- Introduce the topic: i.e. “Today we’re going to talk about challenges and solutions that impact healthy food access in the City of Manchester”
 - See Project Background section for more information.
- Ask the group to introduce themselves.
- Set a few ground rules. Here are some ideas to share to set the tone and expectations of the conversation.
 - All responses are valid—there are no right or wrong answers.
 - Please respect the opinions of others even if you don’t agree. Everyone is coming to this conversation with different experiences and perspectives that can add to the richness of the discussion.
 - Let people finish their thought before adding your comment or changing the subject.
 - Try to stay on topic; we (facilitators) may need to interrupt so that we can cover all the material.
 - Speak as openly as you feel comfortable - the more information gathered here, the more community feedback can be incorporated into the Plan. The point here is to generate ideas for potential solutions. The ideas don’t have to be fully baked yet, so please share what you’re thinking about!

- **Facilitated Discussion Questions**

- Here, focus on posing the questions and following up on participants’ responses. The note taker will be responsible for capturing a summary of the feedback, so you can actively listen.
- Be sure you stay focused on policies, programs, and incentives that could be achieved by local government (i.e the City of Manchester). So, answers like “increase funding in the Farm Bill” wouldn’t be relevant, because that’s a federal program. But, “increase city funding for food pantries” would be a viable suggestion.
- The first question is about challenges and barriers. The point here is to hear from stakeholders and residents about what issues they run into when they’re trying to access healthy food.
 - **Introductory Question: What does “healthy food” mean to you?**
 - **What foods do you consider “healthy”**
 - **What challenges/barriers make it difficult for you, your family or neighbors to access healthy and culturally appropriate food?**
 - If needed, prompts could be:
 - Think of a time when you tried to access healthy food in Manchester, what, if anything, got in your way?
 - What makes it difficult to locate healthy food in Manchester?
 - I.e. lack of stores with healthy choices
 - What makes it difficult to reach healthy food in Manchester?
 - I.e. reliable or direct transportation difficulties
 - What makes it difficult to choose healthy foods?
 - I.e. higher prices, no time to cook, unsure what to do with some fresh foods
 - What makes it difficult to find foods that you ate in your home country or remind you of home?

- I.e. no ethnic grocery stores, or conventional stores hike the prices on ethnic foods
 - Do you know of other neighborhoods or communities that face difficulties in accessing healthy or culturally appropriate food?
 - Which ones?
 - Are the difficulties the same or different? How?
- The next question is about solutions. The point here is to capture ideas that stakeholders and residents think would work in the City of Manchester.
 - **What would make it easier for you, your family, and your neighbors to access to healthy food and food from your home country?**
 - If needed, prompts could be:
 - How could the city increase the number of healthy food retailers?
 - I.e. incentivize new grocery stores to locate within the city
 - How could the city improve spaces where healthy foods are sold?
 - I.e. incentivize stores (dollar stores, corner stores, etc.) to stock certain amounts of fresh/healthy foods
 - How could the city improve transportation to healthy food outlets?
 - I.e. aligning public transportation routes with stores and pantries
 - How could the city help to encourage residents to choose healthy foods?
 - I.e. nutrition or cooking education classes
 - I.e. expanded healthy food options and related education in schools
 - What are other ways that the City could ensure healthy foods are accessible to the community?
 - I.e. funding the food pantry and emergency food distribution network
 - I.e. supporting a network of community gardens in city park spaces
 - Do you know of other neighborhoods or communities where these efforts/changes would also help them with healthy food access?
 - Which ones?
 - How?
 - Do you know of neighborhoods where the residents do not have problems accessing healthy foods?
 - Which ones?
 - Why don't they have the challenges you have?
- **Open Discussion**
 - What are we missing?
 - What other ideas do you have?
- **Wrap Up**
 - End the discussion by summarizing the main themes.
 - Invite participants to reflect on the main ideas, and confirm if this was what they heard as well.
 - Thank the group for participating.
 - Let them know the discussion results will be used as part of the cumulative community feedback that will help to inform the Healthy Food Access Plan recommendations.
 - Encourage participants to also fill out and share the survey!
 - Let them know we can share the outcome of survey/focus groups with them; ask for email / phone numbers (sign in sheet)

NOTE TAKERS

- [Please use the documents created in this folder](#) to take notes during the roundtable discussion. This helps us ensure that all the feedback is captured and no handwritten notes are lost or unreadable!
 - Make sure that you're connected to the venue's WiFi to automatically save the Google documents. If WiFi is not available, take notes in a downloaded version and upload it to the notes folder after the event.
- Notes do NOT have to be verbatim - just try to capture the key points and highlights.

SAMPLE AGENDA *(for a 90 minute event)*

- **Materials Needed**
 - [Sign in sheet](#)
 - Pens
 - Nametags
 - Sharpies
 - Printed signage (if applicable) - guide participants from entry to venue room
 - Printed facilitation guide
 - Computer for note taking
 - Refreshments (if applicable)

TASK	TIME	NOTES
Meeting Set Up	30 minutes before meeting starts	- Arrange seating - Set out refreshments if applicable - Set up signage if applicable - Connect to venue WiFi for note taking - Set out sign up sheet & nametags
Participant Arrival	0:00 - 00:05	- Make sure everyone signs in and grabs a nametag
Introductions & Level Setting	00:05 - 00:20	- Provide project background - Introduce yourself as facilitator and notetaker - Ask participants to introduce themselves - Share some basic ground rules and expectations
Facilitated Discussion	00:20 - 01:00	- See questions
Open Discussion	01:00 - 01:15	- Open space for additional thoughts
Wrap Up	01:15 - 01:30	- Summarize main themes - Thank everyone for their participation - Reiterate how feedback will be used

		as part of the HFAP process
Post Event Tasks	30 minutes after meeting ends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure notes are saved and/or uploaded into Google Drive folder - Collect sign in sheets and capture participant numbers - Upload any photos - Reset venue space